

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 SAM-01 ORM-02 DHA-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05

AID-05 OC-06 CCO-00 PPT-01 SCS-03 SCA-01 VO-03 OMB-01

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R 191431Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9203

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5525

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: FURTHER INFORMATION ON BORDER RESTRICTIONS

REF: DAMASCUS 5486

1. TWO AMCITS REPORTED IN REFTEL AS HAVING DIFFICULTIES ENTERING SYRIA MANAGED TO OBTAIN ENTRY AUGUST 18. THEY APPARENTLY PERMITTED TO ENTER AFTER BORDER RECEIVED CABLE AUTHORIZING THEIR ENTRY FROM INTERIOR MINISTRY IN DAMASCUS. BRITISH MILATT SAID HE TOLD BY CHIEF AT BORDER CROSSING THAT FOREIGNERS CARRYING REGULAR PASSPORTS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN PASS FROM GOVERNORATE AT ZAHLE BUT INSTEAD WOULD BE REFUSED ENTRY UNTIL CABLE FROM DAMASCUS MININTERIOR REACHED BORDER: LOCAL EMBASSIES SUPPOSEDLY TASKED WITH INITIATING ACTION BY MINISTRY FOR THEIR OWN NATIONALS (WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY CONFIRMATION FROM SARG OFFICIALS THAT THIS PROCEDURE HAS BEEN INSTITUTED).

2. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY TWO SOURCES WHO ENTERED FROM
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LEBANON THAT LEBANESE MUST FIRST VISIT SECURTY OFFICE

AT ZAHLE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE TO HAVE THEIR NAMES PLACED ON LIST WHICH SENT HOURLY TO MASNAA. EACH LIST CONTAINS ONLY TWELVE NAMES. LIST THEN CROSS-CHECKED AT MASNAA AND USUALLY FROM FIVE-TEN APPLICANTS FROM ORIGINAL LIST PERMITTED TO DEPART LEBANON. THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN PERMITTED TO ENTER BY END OF WORKING DAY MUST RETURN TO ZAHLE NEXT DAY AND REPEAT PROCESS. ACCORDING TO ONE OF THSE SOURCES, MUSLIMS BEING TURNED BACK AT ZAHLE IN LARGE NUMBERS; LISTS MADE UP PRODOMINATELY OF CHRISTIANS. HE ADDED THAT MASNAA IS SCENE OF MASS CONFUSION, WITH MANY HUNDREDS OF DISGRUNTLED LEBANESE IMPLOING SYRIAN OFFICIALS TO LET THEM CROSS.

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AT DAMASCUS OFFICE WHICH ISSUES TRAVEL PERMITS INTO LEBANON AUTHORITIES RECENTLY OBLIGED TO TURN WATER HOSES ON MASSIVE CROWD OF APPLIANTS WHICH HAD GROWN UNRULY.
MURPHY

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